A Farewel

SERMON

Preached in

VVAKE-FIELD,

January 1, 1655.

By *Thomas Parker*, Master of Arts, late Minister of that Church.

Published upon the importunity, and for the satisfaction of the good People of Wakefield.

Ἀποθανὼν ἔτι λαλεῖται. *Heb.* 11. 4.

LONDON:

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To the ever Honoured, and my very good friend, Mrs. *Frances Hustler*, at *Lupset*.

Madam,

IT was not any Ambition to be seen in the Press, but the daily importunities of my ever dear people, which brought this Sermon to see the light; when I Preached it, I had no other thoughts of Printing it, then in your breasts; I shall think my pains well bestow'd, if the eye may so second the ear, that both may be an advantage to the Soul, and leave so deep an impression of the true fear of God in your hearts, that you may be the Epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God.

Madam, *You will meet here with the words of truth and soberness, in a plain and homely dresse, that which an age never more wanted, nor could lesse indure: Truth is like Beauty, never more fair, then when she goes the plainest: This discourse will meet with my Adversaries, but be welcome to my friends; to whose Consciences, rather then Closets, I desire to commend it: For my own part, I desire to refer my self to the wisedom of God, who knows how to chuse best for me, and through his blessing, whatever it cost me, to run the Ermin's fate (fall into the hands of the Hunter, rather then foul her body) The great share that New-Years day had in your tears, makes me bold to beg some interest in your Prayers; and I shall not despair, in Gods good time, of my restauration to the Vineyard: In the mean time, I commend you and yours, to that bloud of sprinkling which speaketh better things then the blood of* Abel, Madam, *I am*

From my study at Northgate-head, June 24. 1656.

Your affectionate friend and servant in Christ Jesus,

Tho. Parker.

Eccles.

Eccles. 12. 13.

I Am this day to take my leave, not only of you (my good people) but of the Pulpit also; To bid farewell to that High Calling, the great Harvest of Heaven, wherein I have for these eighteen years, painfully and faithfully, and I bless my God, fruitfully laboured. I do not herein strive to justifie my self, God knoweth my heart; if there be any glory, it is the Lords, I know the Apostles Rule very well; *Not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth:* 2 Cor. 10. 18.

I know not well upon what account to commend this Sermon this day, whether as a Farewel to you, or a Funeral to my self; for so indeed it is: To impede the execution of that Calling wherein we are employed, and whereby we should do God that service for which he hath Commissionated us; To force the rusting of the Talents, which our great Master hath commanded us to put to usury: To stop our mouths, and put out our eyes, when our hands are at the Plough: What is it, but to bury a man alive, or to leave him like that wounded *Pilgrim* in the Gospel, ἡμιθανῆ? *Luk.* 10. 30. How bitter would this Cup be, if the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ had not sweetned it? What an excellent saying that is? *The servant is not greater then his Lord, nor the Disciple above his Master; If they have persecuted me; they will also persecute you,* &c. And lest they should forget so necessary and useful a Doctrine, he puts a special *Memento* upon it, *Joh.* 15. 20. *Remember the words that I have said to you,* &c. What ever shall befall me, or any of my fellow Labourers; We shall ever pray that God may bless his Church; and I doubt not but he will in his good time restore her to her Purity, and her Peace.

Old Mercies, thankfully received, are strong ingagements for new: Your spirits will witnesse with me this day, what cause I have to bless God, as much, I think, as any man that ever laboured in his Vineyard. First for my persecutions; It is an excellent saying of St. *Paul,* 2 Cor. 12. 10. *I take pleasure*

ἐυδοκῶ *in perſecutions*; the words is a Goſpel Expreſſion, and ſignifies a willing, pleaſing Approbation, not without much inward contentment: The moſt precious thing that good Apoſtle ever deſired to receive, he expreſſeth by this word, namely, *to be preſent with the Lord.* 2 Cor. 5. 8. And the moſt precious thing that ever he deſired to give, he expreſſeth by the ſame words, namely, *The Goſpel of Chriſt, and his own ſoul,* 1. Theſ. 2. 8. and here he makes uſe of it to ſhew how well he was pleaſed, and how much he did approve of himſelf and his Doctrine, becauſe of theſe perſecutions, as being undoubted evidences of the truth of Chriſt. I ſhould for my own part have ſuſpected my ſelf, yea, and my Doctrine too, if both had not been perſecuted; I look upon my perſecutions as love Tokens from Heaven, Pledges of Gods love, and Badges of my own Sonſhip: Let me tell you (my good people) there is no condition in the world, ſo highly deſireable, as that of ſuffering for, and with Chriſt, Ἰδὲ, μακαείτομεν τὸς ὑπομένοντας, this was Divinity in St. *James* his days; Was it not the minute of his ſufferings, wherein *Steven* ſaw the glory of God, and Jeſus ſtanding at his right hand? Shall we think our ſelves worthy to be ſtiled the Diſciples of Chriſt, and run away, or deny him, when he comes to the Crucifying? When ſhe who is the Mother of us all is abuſed, branded, and ſtruggles under pangs and agonies, with the moſt helliſh and unthankful children, that ever Mother bare; ſhall we therefore forget to be Sons, or be aſhamed or afraid to ſuffer? I mean, the Church of *England*, which every knowing and moderate Spirit, not biaſſed, with factions or ſelf-intereſt, muſt needs acknowledg to be the brighteſt, and moſt glorious reſemblance of Primitive purity, that ancient and holy faith, which for theſe twelve hundred years, any man ever had the honour of contending or ſuffering for: Tell me, have not I great cauſe to look upon it as a bleſſing, or have you any cauſe to be aſhamed of my troubles? What my perſecutions have been, and of what nature, in relation not to my perſon only, but my Doctrine alſo; (the proper work of Hell) with what bitterneſs, violence and injuſtice they have been carried on, your own eyes and ears can ſufficiently witneſs; I bleſſe God this day for the innocency of my own heart, and ſhall have another day

Jam. 6. 11.

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more cauſe to rejoyce in my ſufferings, then my Perſecutors in their victory; *Our rejoycing is this, the Teſtimony of our Conſcience.* 2 Cor. 1. 12

The ſecond Mercy I deſire we may take notice of, is the ſupport and conſtant ſupplies of the Spirit of grace, in and under all theſe ſufferings; a high and unexpreſſible Mercy! When my ſoul was over-whelmed, he laid my hands upon a Rock, a Rock that was higher then I. The more my perſecutions grew, the more did the hand of the Lord appear, in, with, and for me: when the wickedneſs of my Perſecutors grew ſo high, and their ſin ſo ſhameleſs, that they durſt appear like thoſe μεβίμβρινα δαιμόνια, thoſe Noon-day-Divels, and declare their ſin as *Sodom*: when they durſt come into *Bethel* it ſelf, a Houſe of Prayer, a place ſet a part for divine Worſhip; and there with faces harder then flint, out-dare the God and Maſter of that Houſe, and being Whores, to out-face Angels, the Attendants of that Place; when neither the ſacredneſſe, nor dreadfulneſs of the place, nor my own performance of publique Duties, could ſafe-guard me from their helliſh practiſes, (whoſe only capacity is like *Machiavels* undertakers, to be wicked enough) even then the Angel of the Covenant, whoſe I am, and whom I ſerve, ſtood by me; Then was the grace of the Lord with me, to uphold and ſupport me; What ſhall I render to my God for theſe his mercies? *I will take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord*: Pſal. 61, 2.

The third Mercy to be remembred by us, is the continuance of mutual love, betwixt Miniſter and People; a Divine love doubtleſs, becauſe laſting unto the end: The reproaches and ſcandals dayly heaped upon me, could never alienate the heart of any one of my hearers, ſo far, as to a deſertion of me: Muſt we not needs ſay, this was the work of God? Love built upon human foundation, is as the foundation it ſelf, changeable. But here was more then the work of man, God himſelf herein owning my integrity, and approving my Doctrine: I look upon all this, as a fruit of that Sacramental love, wherein our foundation was laid at my firſt coming to you: I cannot, as I have deſired, longer ſerve you in my Preaching, yet my Prayers ſhall never be wanting for you, to that God, who is love; that for thoſe Bowels of love wherewith you have refreſhed me, you may finde mercy

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in that day when you shall most stand in need of it.

But I must to my Text: My first entrance to you was in love, and the main end of my undertaking here, was this; That among this great people, I might be an Instrument of gaining some poor souls to God, (God is my Record, I lye not:) I cannot say but there were some other Considerations went along with it, but they were all subservient to this: How far I was from that sin of Covetousnes, wherewith the people too much brand the Clergy, and sometimes deservedly; I appeal to your selves, I never made any Compact or Covenant with you, upon that account; your offerings have been of free-will, and God hath blessed them: What my Conversation, and Deportment hath been amongst you, notwithstanding the many provocations I have had, I refer to you all; I have not made the Pulpit (where the glory of God, and the riches of Christ, and the salvation of poor souls is concerned) a Stage or Theater to act my own parts and passions in: I have endeavoured to walk inoffensively towards God, and towards man: This also was the Lords work.

Such was my Entrance, and such hath my progres been, your Tears do abundantly witness this day, the sad parting of a Minister and his people, God forgive them (if at least it be lawful to pray for them) who have robbed us one of another, where there was so much love, and so much delight in each other, that we have found God delighting in us all, to do us good: We are now come to the Conclusion, and to that purpose I have made choice of a plain Text, and I shall speak to it with as much plainness. You have it

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ECCLES. 12. 13.

Let us hear the Conclusion of the whole matter; Fear God, and keep his Commandments; this is the whole duty of man.

THat *Solomon* the Son of *David*, was the Penman of this Book, I think, is without dispute; the Style is his, and there

there was no other Son of *David*, King in *Jeruſalem*, but he: The diſpute is of the Title *Choheleth*, which the LXX. render Ἐκκλησιαστὴς: We, the Preacher: and concerning that, there is a double Query. Firſt, Why it is uſed in the Feminine Gender; ſome ſay the word *Nepheſh* is to be underſtood, and ſo it muſt ſignifie a Preaching ſoul: but how that can hold (it being a proper name, and never uſed but in this Book, as *Druſius* obſerves upon the place) I ſee not; Others tell us it is uſual with the Hebrews to put Feminines names upon men; ſo the Goſpel Preachers are called *Mebaſeroth*, *Pſal.* 68. 11. The Lord ſpake the words, great was the company of Preachers or Publiſhers; *Annunciatricum*; But whether they did this to ſet forth the purity of the Preachers of Chriſt, *Prov.* 9. 3. Where they are called Wiſdomes Maids; or thoſe ὠδῖνες, to which the Apoſtle relates, *Gal.* 4. 19. thereby making out, not only the great Throws, but the tender and motherly affection of a faithful Preacher to his people: I ſhall not now ſtand to enquire.

But the ſecond and main Query is, why it is called *Sepher Choheleth*, a Book of Gatherings or Congregations: Some will have it to be one of the names of *Solomon*; as *Jedidiah*, or *Lemuel*: Some ſay, becauſe it was publiquely delivered by *Solomon* himſelf to the Congregation; and ſo it is in his Fathers ſtile, giving God the glory in the great Congregation, *Pſal.* 40. 10. We read of his bleſſings, prayers and ſacrifices, 1 *Reg.* 8. here of his preaching; and thus *Schindler* ſeems to expound it, of a gathering of men; Others will have it ſo called, from *Solomons* being gathered, or re-uniting himſelf after his foul Idolatry and Apoſtacy from the Church; and the Book to be the words of a ſoul or perſon brought back to the unity of the Church, or Congregation of the Saints: But I rather think, without any ſtraining of the words, it relates to the ſubject or matter of the Book. It is a Book of Obſervations, experimentally gathered from Natural, Moral, Political, Domeſtical, and Divine things: Wiſdome is the ſouls great Endowment, nothing more precious, more ſweet, more coveted, eſpecially ſuch as *Solomon's* was; it purſueth ſuch high objects as may improve, and not vitiate the intelectuals; yet he tells us what the fruit of of it frequently is; heliſh policy, pride, violence, oppreſſion and cruelty, wiſedom to do evil: Pleaſures ſuite well with the inferiour and brutiſh part of man, but in the exact enjoyment of them, there

Petagl. upon the words. קהלת

Read Eccl. cap. 2.

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is a mixture either of folly or want, they grow in time loathsome and tedious to the possessors; he tells you of buildings and Vineyards and Orchards, and Fish-Ponds, and Musick, Vocal, and Intrumental; and he concludes upon the survey, *all is vanity*: Riches, the great Idol of the world, the Gold and Silver, the mighty Herds of Cattel, which himself possessed in abundance; he tells us they are but Snares and Thorns, either to entangle or torment us; gotten with labour, kept with fear, and lost with sorrow: All external forms of worship, where Christ is not in the heart, or not met with in the Ordinance, is no more then a fools Sacrifice; or as the word carrys it, the service of hypocritical, light, and unconstant men: These and many other gatherings he makes out from his own experience.

After these discoveries, he prescribes many excellent rules for the settlement of the soul, in reference both to its present and future good: An humble acknowledgment under, and dependance upon, the providence of God, in all events; singleness and sincerity of heart, in his worship and service: The right use of wisedom in discerning times, and judgments; contentedness, and sweet reposedness of soul in every condition of life: Obedience and Loyalty to Superiors; Conscientious walking in our particular Callings: Preparedness of spirit against all tryals and afflictions; Moderation in the use of comforts in this life; and preparation through the fear of God, and obedience, for death and judgment, in the words of my Text: Hence he may well be stiled a Gatherer, and his Book a Book of gatherings.

The grand enquiry of the whole Book, is that *Summum Bonum*, that puzzled all our blind Philosophers; The Preacher here discovers that Stone, that turns all things into Gold, which they have long tired themselves in seeking for, and could never finde to this day. Observe I pray you how he begins this Book, and how he ends it; He begins it with Vanity of vanities; *All is vanity*: Idols, light, vile, things of naught, as the breath of ones mouth, or the bubble in the water, vapours soon vanishing: Vanity of vanities; vain vanity, or extream superiative vanity: This our first Parents saw, and therefore called their second Son *Hebel*, or vanity; *David* confirms it, *Psal.* 144 4. *Adam* is as *Abel*, or man is like to vanity; there is an Allusion in the Original to both their names: And herein he makes out the insufficiency and disability of the Creature,

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to confer any true happineſſe upon the Soul. And ſecondly, obſerve how he ends his book, *Fear God, and keep his Commandments*, methinks it is not much unlike to that of Chriſt to *Martha*; thou art troubled about many things, but one thing is needfull, *Mary* hath choſen the good part, *&c.* He begins you ſee, with nothing, he ends with all things; he ſhews us what our firſt eſtate is, an obſervance of lying vanities, and forſaking our own mercies, he ſhews us what our beſt eſtate is; *Fear God, &c.* We begin at Idols, and vanity, and never know what our beginning was, till we come to this end, never know that we are vain, till we arrive at the true fear of God. *Luke* 10. 41, 42.

My dear people, whom I love and muſt ever love in the bowels of Chriſt Jeſus, and muſt ever call you ſo, though now unhappily torn from you, let not my words this day fall to the ground, lay them up in your hearts; let it ſuffice that you have ſpent your time paſt, in vanities and Idols, things of emptineſs and torment; let us not be like the people of thoſe countries, that whatſoever they chance to ſee firſt every morning, they worſhip ſolemnly all the day after; if ſin have had the morning, let the evening be Gods, it is time we ſhould come home to that only true happineſs the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: Content not your ſelves with any outward bleſſings til you be ſure you injoy him to the Salvation of your ſouls: other excellencies may ſet you out in the eys of men, generoſity, obligingneſſe, wiſedom, learning, valour, *&c.* every one of theſe, is ſufficient to be a ſober mans Idol, render a man praiſe worthy, but it is Chriſt only that makes us bleſſed; other bleſſings you may injoy and periſh with them, but he that injoys Chriſt by true faith, ſhall never periſh, but hath everlaſting life. *Ioh.* 3. 16.

The Text is *Solomons* ἕυρηκα, after a ſolicitous inquiry, or the treaſure of true happineſſe diſcovered; it is in it ſelf an exhortation or a duty, you may call it whether you pleaſe, the ſubſtance is the ſame: There is not any thing remarkable in the Preface, ſave that in the Original it begins with a Capital Letter, as pointing out ſome high ſubject, and ſtirring up the more ſerious attention to the matter in hand; which indeed, rightly weighed, is an *Epitome* of the whole Goſpel: Would you know after my long obſervations, what you are to truſt to? What is the ſum and ſubſtance of the whole matter; Where true and durable felicity may be found? It is in this, *Fear God and keep his Commandments*: without this, man

is but as one calls him, *præstantissimum brutum*; which puts me in mind of that saying, *Job* 28. 28. where the holy man concludes his speech, as the Preacher here doth his book, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisedom, and to depart from evil, is understanding; man then becomes wise when he fears God, when Christ the wisedom of the fatheres dwels in him.

We shall not need, neither did I ever love to name a Text, the conclusion riseth plainly and naturally from it: *To fear God and keep his Commandments, is the whole duty of man*; or as it is in the Hebrew, the whole man, and so the Lxx render it, τῦτο πᾶς ἄνθρωπος; where the true fear of God is once planted, it carries the whole man with it, spirit, soul, and body, guides and directs the whole man, rectifies and reforms the whole man; it is all in all, and through all, sets a price and worth upon the whole man in this life, and crowns and glorifies the whole man in the life to come.

There is a natural fear arising from the sense of humane weakneſse, which is not in it self sinfull; we have examples of it in the Saints, yea, and in Christ himself, *Mat.* 26. 38. *Heb.* 5. 7. he was heard in that he feared, which though the Rhemists translate for his reverence, and charge us with the corrupting of the Text contrary to the version and sense of Antiquity, and the ordinary use of the Greek words; yet I find it, signifying as well a natural as a pious fear, *Acts* 23. 10. where a commotion being raised, the chief Captain or Tribune, is said to be ἐυλαβηθεὶς, afraid lest *Paul* should be torn in pieces, which could not be a pious fear in him that was a Pagan, but a natural civil fear, lest a Roman, a Prisoner, and under his present charge should have been violently and tumultuously murthered between the Pharisees and the Sadduces.

ἀπὸ τῆς ἐυλαβείας.

2. There is a carnal fear, I may call it a fear of diffidence, because arising from unbelief, the Apostles are called δειλοί, *Mat.* 8. 26. carnally fearfull, so the word signifies, if you look *Revel.* 21. 8. and why? because ὀλιγόπιστοι, they were of little faith; and this fear is directly sinfull, when we fear the creature more then the Creator, blessed for ever. This is that fear the Lord speaks of *Isa.* 8. 12. *Fear not their fear*; and our blessed Saviour, *Luke* 12. 4, 5. *Fear not them that kill the body, &c.* And though this fear may have, and frequently hath, natural weaknes for its foundation, yet it is only then sinfull, where nature outvies grace, and self interests are more valued then the glory of God: I deny not but there

Apoc. 21. 8 *They are liable to the second death, and joined with unbeleevers.*

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is a fear due to man upon Gods account, *Rom.* 13. 6. *Fear to whom fear, &c.* there is a reverence due to the persons, and a regard to be had to the Laws of men: But God being alone the proper object of our fear, makes that fear which is due to man, due to him only, in, and for the Lord, whose image he beareth in a more high and eminent manner, by vertue of some Authority or dignity derived to him from God, who is the Fountain of honour, and whose sole propriety it is to ordain powers, the words implying both invention and ratification, *Rom.* 13. 1. the Powers that be, are ordained of God.

3. There is a spiritual fear, and that is a filial, reverential fear of God, arising partly from a sense of want in our selves (which fear commonly supposeth) and partly from the apprehension of Gods excellency, not in his greatnesse only, but also in its goodnesse: This is that fear which keeps the whole man in a religious respect, a holy dreadfulnesse, a sweet dependance upon God, that commands him to walk as in the presence of God, that his whole conversation seems one undiscontinued holy and religious adoration; take that one example of *Joseph Gen.* 30. This is that we call the grace of fear; the affection of fear is in all men naturally, but the grace of the fear of God, is a part of Sanctification, and is not found but in the elect: natural and carnal fear betray the succours of the soul, but this strengthens and confirms it: I call it spiritual, first from the Object, which is God; second, from the efficient or working cause of this fear, which is the Spirit of God, called therefore the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord, *Isay* 11. 2. Thirdly, from the Subject, the inward or spiritual man, hence is the fear of God inward and spiritual, the worship of the mind, the heart, the conscience, will, and affections, all hereby carried out to God. Fourthly, From that spiritual work or effect it hath upon the soul, spiritualizing and sanctifying both our selves and our sacrifices, changing the whole man, from a carnal, worldly, sensual, selfish interest, to a holy, heavenly, spiritual frame of heart.

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Now this spiritual fear may either be taken generally, and so it includes all graces and gracious dispositions of spirit: As faith includes all Evangelical graces in the New-Testament, so doth the fear of God in the Old, compare *Prov.* 13. 14. with *Prov.* 14. 27. Or else more particularly, for that single grace, whereby the Soul is over-awed with the excellencies of God, the greatnesse of God,

working the fear of him, as a Judge; and the goodneſſe of God, working the ſame fear as a father.

It would be a task too large for the ſmall time I have to ſpend, to run through all the branches, properties, and effects of this fear: I ſhall now ſpeak only to a few of them, and thoſe the moſt uſeful for you, in reference to the preſent times, and your preſent wants; there are no words like thoſe in due ſeaſon, or upon their wheels; you ſhall have them without niceneſſe or affectation (the common itch of the Pulpit) according to my wonted manner, with all plainneſſe; plain inſtructions beſt beſeem a dying father, and are the beſt remembred by his children; I ſhall now wave all other accounts, and preſent it to you as a New-years gift, a rich Ring ſet with precious ſtones, which I ſhall deſire may be continually worn, and carried about with you.

Pro. 25. 11

And firſt, to fear God, is to have faith in him; a precious ſtone: this is called by *St. Peter* precious faith; without this we can neither fear him nor pleaſe him. What the Apoſtle ſaies, *Rom.* 10. 14. how ſhall they call on him, in whom they have not beleeved? the like we may ſay of other graces, how can we either love or ſerve, or fear, or glorifie God, except we believe in him? it was faith that made *Enoch*'s work acceptable, and was the ground of the tranſlating there ſpoken of: whether the μετετέθη, mean exemption from death, as *Elias* is ſaid to have been under the Moral Law, or ſome other deliverance, it matters not, certainly it was through faith the Embleme of the Goſpel; it is ſometimes called the mouth and the ear, but moſt properly the eye of the Soul; hereby we ſee through the things of this world, and above them, we meet with an object worth our loving and looking on: we ſee Chriſt, and God in Chriſt, and in him mercy, peace, ſalvation; we look out of our ſelves, *Heb.* 12. 2. and meet with Goſpel truth, righteouſneſſe, in another, a Surety, a Mediator; we ſee the brazen Serpent that cures our wounded ſouls, *John* 3. 14. therefore the words here uſed for fear, is by the Lxx. in the ſeventh verſe of this Chapter, rendred *to ſee*; noting, that to fear God and have faith in him, is to ſee God; and beyond reaſon to have an in-ſight into thoſe Myſteries, which were denyed to the Angels, 2 *Pet.* 1. 12. As the eye in the body is the Organ by which we ſee things viſible, ſo is faith in the ſoul, to ſee the things of God; hereby we peep through the Curtains of earth and mortality, and take a view of Heavens

2 *Pet.* 1. 1

Heb. 11. 5.

Crede & mandu caſti, Auguſt

πίστις ὠτα ψυχῆς. *Clem.* Alex

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Treasures: Hence come our great priviledges, *union with Christ*, *Eph.* 3. 17. and consequently, an intimate and familiar communion with him in his promises, Sonship, Victories, Intercessions: Faith is that spiritual Ligament that makes us one with Christ; Other graces, as Love, Patience, Meekness, *&c* may be the grounds of a moral Union; and make a man like Christ, but it is faith only that is the foundation of a mystical Union, and makes a Beleever one with Christ.

I do not intend to insist upon the Nature, Properties and Effects of Faith. I have heretofore made them out to you: My present Task relates to the present times, and your both present and future benefit: There is not any grace more disesteemed and misesteemed slighted, and mis-judged, then this branch of Divine fear: Let me therefore commend to you, two main Remembrances to be treasured up by you, when your eyes shall be deprived of your Teacher.

And First, I would advise you, ever to set a high esteem upon this grace, to look upon it as the most glorious Stone in the Ring: The rest have their luster, this is both resplendent and medicinal, heals broken souls; It is no wonder if St. *Jude* give it the preheminence, since it is both the leading grace, and brings the first glad tidings of salvation; and also the Mother grace, whence all others have their birth and original: Without this what are all our works and duties, but as we say of the vertues of Heathens, *Splendida peccata?* Where faith is not layd as the foundation, all our devotions, acts of piety, charity, observance of Sabbaths, Ordinances; nay, that great performance of Prayer, are but like that structure built on the sand, *Mat.* 7. 26. Without this we can no more appear before the Tribunal of Gods justice, then stubble before a consuming fire: In the word, it is faith that must make us profitable, in obedience it is faith that must make us cheerful; in prayer it is faith that makes us successfull; and in all performances it is faith that makes us acceptable: This is that wisedome, the price whereof is above Rubies, the Topaze of *Ethiopia* cannot equal it, it cannot be valued with pure Gold: This will give comfort, joy, and peace under all distractions, make the soul skip like a Lambe, leap and dance for joy: Other divine qualifications may make you confident, but it is faith only that must give you your assurance: There cannot be such an abasement where faith will

Job 28. 16, 17, 18, 19. πιστεύοντες ἀγαλλιᾶσθε 1 Pet. 1. 8.

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not lift up the head, and render you victorious: Juſtice gives every man his own; temperance will reſtrain luſts; magnanimity will bear, and go through any hardſhip, prudence is an excellent guide to our actions, but it is faith that overcometh the world: in this *Paul* inſults and triumphs over men and Angels, Heaven and Earth, *Rom.* 8. 38, 39. πέπεισμα, I am confident or perſwaded *That neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers,* &c. *ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.*

You will have a better heart, both to the price and the eſteem of it, if you ſeriouſly adviſe with theſe conſiderations: The Author: The Offices; and the Effects of it.

Infundendo creat creando infundit.

Firſt, Look upon it as Gods gift, from whom every good and perfect gift cometh, as a fruit of his Spirit, *Gal.* 5. 22. This will make it excellent and lovely: Let us a little view it in that great intereſt of our ſouls, the high act of juſtification; we ſhall there finde it to juſtifie, not as mans faith, but as the work of God in in the ſoul: It is an excellent place, *Eph.* 2. 8. *By grace ye are ſaved through faith, and that not of your ſelves, it is the gift of God;* faith may be in us, but it is not of us; that is, not from any power of our own, but it is a meer gift of God, both in the habit, and in the act of it: Juſtification is is a free Act, of, and from eternity, without any condition on our parts: and that Evangelical righteouſneſs by which we are juſtified, is without us in Chriſt: It is the finger of God that works faith in the ſoul, and having wrought it, puts it upon acting, thereby to evidence juſtification to the ſoul. As a father having layd up for his ſon a great Treaſure, in ſome ſecret place, tells him of it, and beſtows it freely upon him, but wanting the poſſeſſion and enjoyment of it, the ſon is no richer for it, till the father lights a Torch, guides his ſon to the hidden Treaſure, and puts him into the actual poſſeſſion of it: Thus is Faith Gods Inſtrument, by which he diſcovers to our ſouls the unvaluable riches of Chriſt (which in the minds and purpoſe of the Donor was ours from Eternity) and evidenceth us to be freely juſtified, lending us that light of faith, whereby we apprehend, enjoy and apply Chriſt to our ſouls: It is called the evidence of things not ſeen, *Heb.* 11. 1. Whoſe evidence? Gods evidence given us, by which he declareth and manifeſteth to our conſciences thoſe ἀόρατα, the inviſible things of our juſtification and ſalvation,

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and when given, it is our evidence also, by which we posſeſs Chriſt, and pleads our actual juſtification againſt all the accuſations of the Law, ſin and Satan, then we have the witneſſe in our ſelves, 1 *Joh.* 5. 10. μαρτυρίαν τῶ θεῶ, Gods witneſs; ſo it is ſometimes read, witneſſing to our ſpirits, that we are the children of God, we are juſtified freely by his grace, *Rom.* 3. 24: The word δωρεὰν there, anſwering to the Hebrew *Chinnam*, excluding all, both hope of advantage on Gods part, and preceding deſert in man, upon any account whether of faith or works, excluding as well merit as rewards; hereby intimating, that all our works are the works of God in us; yea faith it ſelf in that great and high Act of juſtifying, is Gods gift: I have here made a little digreſſion to acquaint you with the excellency of this grace, that you may ſet a higher value upon it, not only becauſe it is Gods gift, but ſo high and precious a gift of his right hand, whereby he gives us an intereſt to Chriſt, and all his promiſes, and evidenceth eternal life to our ſouls.

2. Conſider the Offices of faith (which beſides union to, and communion with Chriſt formerly named) are theſe two: Firſt, acceptance; wherby we are made willing to receive Chriſt upon Chriſts own terms; what his terms are, he himſelf tells you, *Luke* 9. 23. *If any man will come after me, he muſt deny himſelf and take up his Croſſe daily, and follow me*: This is the receiving act of faith, and is therfore called the hand of the Soul, not for its working quality purifying the heart, reviving the dead ſpirit, working by love, carrying the Soul through all diſcouragements; theſe are indeed the works of faith, but for its receiving and accepting quality, accepting righteouſneſſe in Chriſt, receiving him as a gift of his fathers love, imbracing the promiſes afar off, and laying hold on eternal life: The working righteouſneſſe is Chriſts, the Office or act of faith, is accepting, applying, receiving, yeelding conſent to that righteouſneſſe.

The other Office or Act of Faith, is reſignation, whereby we give our ſelves wholly up to Chriſt, ſpirit, ſoul, and body, to be guided and byaſſed by him, this is that ſpiritual marriage, *Eph.* 5. 17. betwixt Chriſt and the Soul, by which, as the ſoul hath a propriety and right to the body, name, goods, table, poſſeſſions and purchaſe of Chriſt; ſo ſhe doth reciprocally become all his, by an unconſtrained reſignation of her will, ways, and deſires, unto his guidance and government; we become the ſervants of Chriſt to be ruled, as well as to be aided and protected by him; then doth

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Christ own us, and he stands ingaged to watch over and care for us: Then must the Soul have all Christ, and Christ the whole soul, no sharing, no competition with any lust, but Jesus Christ becomes all in all to us, and we are made willing to follow the Lamb whither soever he goeth.

3. Consider the admirable vertues or effects of faith, this also will help to put a high esteem upon it. Faith dissolves the Plots of all our spiritual enemies, it will give you a conquest over sin, the Divel, and the World, it will quicken your souls, *Gal.* 2.20. *Sanctifie and Purifie your hearts*, Acts 15. 9. hereby you shall obtain whatever you stand in need of, and God hath promised; it will bear you up in all dangers, discouragements, desertions, deaths; hereby you shall stand, live, walk, be saved, *&c.* this will bring you to God, to whom no man comes but by Christ, nor to Christ, but by faith. I could be large in these things, if I had not formerly made them out to you: The Lord bring them home to the hearts of every one of you: This is the first main remembrance; To have a high and precious esteem of Faith.

Secondly, I would advise you ever to have a right judgment of Faith; Every fancy in these days is pretended for faith and light; and the soul easily mistakes presumption or credulity for this great grace: therefore it will much concern you to know, and ever to remember, that is not a bare acknowledgment or assent to divine truths, and the promises of Christ, as the Socinians would have it, but an application or closing with Christ in those truths and promises; for not the promises of Christ barely, but the person of Christ, is the object of faith: It is a resting upon *Jehovah*, a rolling a mans self upon God; as one tired under his burthen, casts both himself and his burthen upon something that sustains it. *Prov.* 3. 5. *Isai.* 10. 20. As *Saul* tired with fighting, leaned upon his Spear, 2 *Sam.* 1. 6. I do not mean in this place, that inferiour Act of faith, the trusting God with our temporal well being (though even this be a beleevers prerogative, and makes all those dreams and wishes of the old Philosophers, the *Sceptick*, ἀδιαφορία, and ἀταξαξία; the *Stoick*, μὴ ποιεῖν τραγωδίας; and the *Epicure*, γαλήνη, to become the reality and acquisition of a Christian, a holy Epicurism, which faith, and only faith furnisheth us with) but I mean that faith which closes with the blood of Christ, for eternal life and salvation: There is an excellent place in *Rom* 10. 10, where man

man is said to beleeve with the heart, noting that it is not a bare closing with divine truths in our understandings; Jews and Devils will do that, but a consent or walking up to the goodness of God in Christ, whereby he is loved above all things, longed for, and trusted to above all things, becomes food, rayment, life, all things to us: And this you must look upon as Gods work too, None can thus close with him, but they whose hearts the Lord openeth. Acts 16.

Before I pass this Branch of divine fear, there is one thing I would put you in mind of; it will much help your judgment of faith, and it is this; That true faith is ever waited on with self denial; where this is not, there is no faith nor fear of God; Faith carries with it an *Abdication*, not only of natural but spiritual self; the soul findes vanity and nothingnesse, not in reason only, but in duty also without Christ: In *Josephs* vision, the Sun, Moon, and Stars, did obeysance to him, and all the sheaves in the field, bowed to his sheafe: In the soul, life, way and work of a regenerate man, all moral abilities and endowments, all natural powers and faculties of the soul; nay, all supernatural gifts and graces prostrate themselves at the feet of Christ: Then will the soul follow Christ in the knowledge of his will, in the belief of his promises, in the love of his truth, in the obedience of his commands, then wilt thou lay aside thine own wisdom as an empty Lamp, thine own will as an evil commander; thine own reason as a false rule; thine own affections as corrupt Counsellors; thine own ends as base and corrupt marks to be aimed at: *Not a hoof shall be left in Ægypt*, thou wilt empty thy self, that thou mayst be capable of Christ, go out of thy self, that thou mayst come to Christ: Christ will reign as that Centurion, *Mat* 8. 8, 9. come or go, the poor heart is ready for him; take away this, your faith is no more then a pretence, a self flattery; you must go quite out of your selves, before you can enjoy a Saviour: The Lxx. have not cast *Adam* into a sleep (as the Hebrew Text) but into an ἔκστασι, a being hurried out of himself to make him capable of an helper; if you shall not meet with this upon inquiry into your own spirits, your faith is naught, and all your service and worship of God, and affront to your Redeemer, or to give it the best language, plain Pharisaism and Hypocrisie, and God will one day cast all your duties as dung and dirt in your faces and say, *Who required these things at your hand?* The Lord

ἀπαρνησάσθω. Luke 9.23. Genesis 37 Exo: 10.26 Gen. 2.21.

give you ſelf-denying hearts; The Lord encreaſe faith in every one of you: This is the firſt Jewel or Stone in the Ring: He that fears God, beleeves in him.

To fear God, is to wait on him and for him, an excellent and uſeful Lecture, frequently inculcated by the Prophet in the Pſalms, as a fruit of the true fear of God; he doubles his expreſſion, *Pſal.* 27. 14. Wait on the Lord, wait I ſay on the Lord: He joyns waiting upon God, and keeping his way, *Pſal.* 37. 34. Obſerve what high promiſes the Scripture makes to this waiting: *Immunity from ſhame*, Pſal. 25. 3. *The inheritance of the earth*, Pſal. 37. 9 *Renewing of ſtrength, mounting up with wings as Eagles, &c.* Iſ. 40. 31 בלק *New ſupplies of ſpirit*, when they ſeem to be quite ſpent and loſt, a change to be better conditioned, flying over all difficulties they *Iſa.* 40. 31. meet with; deliverance from enemies, *Prov.* 20. 22. *The fulfiling the deſires of our hearts*, &c.

But how or wherein you ſhould wait upon God, and expreſs your true fear of him, is my task now to acquaint you: Much of this I ſhall from my own experience commend to you, and I hope you will not forget my words another day; They will be of great uſe to you: Wait upon God in his ways, and wait upon him in his time: I cannot commend any thing more advantagious to you, whether you look at the preſent diſtempers and diſtractions of the world, or the future comfort and ſettlement of your ſpirits upon all accounts.

Firſt, wait upon him in his own ways, the ways of his Ordinances, and the ways of his Diſpenſations: Firſt in the ways of his Ordinances, in hearing the word, attending at the Gates of Wiſdome, in the honour and uſe of the Sacrament, in prayer, and other Divine Inſtitutions: This is the way Chriſt hath preſcribed and in all ages wonderfully bleſſed to his Church: I have experimentally found it in my ſelf, and to my great comfort have had the acknowledgment of it from many of you, by, and under my Miniſtry: Theſe are the Channels of grace, the Conduit-pipes by which God conveys himſelf, and the waters of life to his people; here will your ſouls meet with God, and finde the enjoyment of him, and the due obſervation of them is a ſtrong Teſt of your obedience: I know that after my departure, you will meet with Foxes and Wolves, ſome crying down all Ordinances, as things carnal, and below a ſpiritual and raiſed eſtate; they will tell you they are weak and low adminiſtrations, no more then walking by Moon

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light; they will tell you that Seraphical men, are above: and beyond all Ordinances, and their Enthusiasms of greater concernment then the Ordinances of Christ: you will meet on the other hand with those, who so far cry up Ordinances, that they make Idols of them, slighting him who is the substance, men of Pharisaical Spirits and Interests, who while they should preach Christ and him crucified, will preach themselves, their own parts, passions and interests, whereby you may probably be made weary both of them and their preaching: My ever dear people, let none of these things drive you from the Church of God, or deter or discourage you from following Christ in those ways he hath prescribed; let it be your care to wait on him: I have known some who taking offence at these things (*wo in the mean time to him by whom the offence cometh*) have in these times declined either to Popery or Atheism; I beseech God blesse you: I hope better things of you, and should be heartily grieved to see such sad failings in any of you: I have two things to commend to you in this Point, for your better satisfaction.

First, Rest not in a bare formal attendance upon the Ordinance. The Harlot can say, I have made my peace offerings to day, the Ordinance is but the means, the end is Communion with Christ, and fruition of him: The Jews promised themselves much from the naked presence of the Temple, though they had but small honour for the Lord of it: *Micah* promised himself mountains when he had got a *Levite* to be his Priest, though he still retained his Idols: The Pharisees boasted they were the seed of *Abraham*, when they did the works of the *Devil*; How many poor souls have thus turned the means of salvation into the means of destruction, feeds upon husks instead of the true bread: nay turned their food into poison, not finding Christ in the Ordinances, nor being led home to Christ by them? My good people, think it not enough that you have *Gehezi* with his masters staff; that you have Christs Minister, and Christs word, but as that Shunamite, lay hold on Christ himself, where every faithful soul sees, casts, receives, enjoys in these Ordinances.

Ier. 7. 4.
Iudges 17. 13.
Ioh. 8. 33. 44.
2 *King* 4. 30.

Secondly, when thou hast done thy best and purest service, and met with Christ in the Ordinances, rest not in the work done, loath your selves, with a sincere acknowledgment of your own unworthinesse, and the unprofitablenesse, imperfections and iniquities of your most holy things, ever resting upon free-grace:

Be ſo careful of duty, as if there were no grace to juſtifie you, and ſo reſt upon grace, as if no work were to be done by you.

And then ſecondly, wait upon God in the ways of his providence and diſpenſations, this is that excellent grace, a fruit of the ſanctifying ſpirit of God, whereby the ſoul freely ſubmits not to the will only, but to the wiſdom of God, in all the croſſe acts of Providence we meet with in this life, enabling us to bear our own burthens without inordinate ſorrow, or fretting diſcontent: As by faith we injoy God, and by love we injoy our neighbour; ſo through humble waiting, and ſubmiſſion to the wiſedom of God, we poſſeſſe our own ſouls; This is an excellent leſſon, but hard for fleſh and blood to learn, to beleeve that God can chuſe beſt for us, better then we our ſelves: Are not *Abanah* and *Parphar* Rivers of *Damaſcus*, better then all the Waters of *Iſrael* 2 *Reg* 5.12. Kinds of age, a few fatherly kiſſes and imbraces, a portion in my hand, this nature cries out for, and would be well pleas'd with; but the ſoul that fears God, hath learned with *Paul*, to be content in every condition of life, hath learned that ſublime Phyloſophy of ſubſcribing to Gods wiſedom, not to his will only (that he will force us to, and he is a kind of mad Atheiſt that ſhould deny it) but to his wiſedom, to acknowledge God the beſt chuſer for us, the ſtripes he ſends more ſuitable to us, then all the bleſſings we pray for, his denying our demands, the moſt divine way of granting them, reſolving whatever he impoſes upon us, is beſt for us: his thoughts are not like our thoughts, Heaven and Earth are not alwaies of one opinion; *Good is the Word of the Lord*, ſays good *Hezekiah*, when deſtruction was denounced to his whole family: *It is the Lord let him do what ſeemeth him good*, ſays old *Eli*, when beſides the loſſe of both his children in one day, God tells him, *there ſhould not be an old man in his houſe for ever*: *All things* (ſaith *Paul*) *work together for good to them that love God*: This ſubmiſſion to the Wiſdom of God, and the conſequent of it, *Rejoycing in Tribulation*, is that waiting upon God, which I would now inſtruct you in, that better days may teach you humbleneſſe, which is a part of this fear, *Prov.* 22. 4. and worſer days may teach you that Chriſtian patience, whereby you ſhall be inabled to undergo the hands of heaven, to look after deliverance in the ways, and accept it upon the terms of God.

My dear people, you are my glory, and crown of rejoycing, let me commend the ſerious remembrance of this to your Spirit; It

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was never of more uſe then in theſe times of the Churches perſecution: You ſhall ſee men ſtrangely and ſeverally wreſtling and tugging under Gods Diſpenſations: In one man a ſupine ſtupidity; in another the relieving his melancholy thoughts in a cup of Lethe, a ſleeping Pill of good fellowſhip; like *Sauls* ſending to the Minſtrel when the evil ſpirit came upon him, or his ſecond addreſs to the Witch, to charm the judgment that was ready to invade him; you ſhall ſee a third multiplying his ſins as faſt as God his judgments, like the Elephants in the *Maccabees*, whom the blood of the Mulberies more enraged, hardning like *Pharaoh* under the rod; like *Ahab*, and *Ahaz*, growing worſe under the judgment: you will meet with more plauſible effects then theſe, in one, a contempt of the world, his experience having acquainted him with the vanity, and his miſeries with the vexation of it; In another, perhaps a contempt or wearineſſe of his life, like a diſcontented *Jonah*; *Take, I beſeech thee my life from me*; or *Elias* under the Juniper Tree, *it is enough*, &c. and this is ſometimes accounted a ſpecial piece of piety and mortification: A third falls to his prayers, oftner then uſual, and is importunate in the duty, as the tempeſt in *Jonah* caſt the Heathen Mariners *upon* their knees; A fourth making ſome progreſs towards reformation, wiſhings and wouldings, that he were a better man, but all theſe make not up this breach of divine fear, this true waiting upon God, and ſubmiſſion to his wiſdom: I ſhall now deſire for your future good to commend theſe Inſtructions to you.

1. Be ſure to eye God in all his diſpenſations, whether of mercy or judgement, for all mercies ſpiritual and temporal return thanks to him from whom every good and perfect gift cometh, as a Preſent both to humbleneſſe and thankfulneſſe; but that which I would now commend to you, is, the eying of God in the ſeveral diſpenſations of his judgements; whoſoever be the inſtrument, look upon him as the author of the puniſhment; there is the hand and counſel of God, προωρίζων γενέσθαι, *Acts* 4. 28. All the ſin and furies, guilt and damnation of Hell, may be in the ποιειν, the doing or executing Gods Will (*Satan* alone having the Patent of perſecution, and every Perſecutor intrenching upon Hell for his Commiſſion) but then all the mercy, and all wiſedom, ſometimes the redeeming of a World in the γενέσθαι, the thing being done; *Paul* calls his ſuffering, στίγματα Ιησῦ, the brands or prints of Chriſt, not only the tranſcripts of his ſuffering, but the works of his hands alſo: I dare commend this to you from my own experience, I have found it a ſtrong ſupport to

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me under my ſad perſecutions, and I have cauſe to bleſſe God this day, that he made me a ſufferer, and puniſhed me immediately for my ſins (a faire ſtep to future Salvation) and not a Perſecutor, whereby adding affliction to Gods anger, my own helliſh ſpirit had wrapped me up to eternal deſtruction.

Secondly, That you may rightly wait on him, you muſt not only look upon theſe diſpenſations, as Gods hand, but as his right hand, the hand of love, look upon your afflictions, as cauſtick Plaiſters, preparatory to the incarnative, the Knife and the Lance reckoned by *Hypocrates* among the μαλαγμάτων γένεα, the mollifying Preparations, which the Phyſitian muſt ever carry about with him; as your new Artiſts tels us of a Feaver, it is not properly a diſeaſe, but an indeavour or ſtrife of nature to cure her ſelf; ever look upon your afflictions, as deſigned for your good, for the humiliation of your untamed ſpirits, to bring you to a neerer ſight of your God, a neerer ſight of your ſelves, a ſtricter inquiry into your own hearts, to deal neer to God, to make your Peace with him and the like: Look not upon them, as things from chance or malice, thoſe two heathen principles of Theology, τύχη καὶ φθόνος δαίμονος, but as ſent on purpoſe from love, and pondering from judgement and bowels, ſent not as a curſe to you for ſin, that is already ſatisfied, to, and for the elect in Chriſt, but as tryals and fatherly chaſtizements to bring you to himſelf.

Secondly, as we are to wait upon God in his ways, ſo it is a part of his fear to wait upon him in his times: It is recorded as an errour of Gods own people, that they limited the holy one of *Iſrael*, *Pſalm* 78. 41. they would ſign, deſign, circumſcribe God, write or determine for or inſtead of God, bring him down and confine him to their own times, and their own wayes; a folly we are all naturally inclined to, whether in caſe of judgement inflicted, or mercies promiſed and expected, we are all for the preſent time; but Gods times are not our times, *My times are in thy hands*, ſays *David*, *Pſal.* 31. 15. as well the time of removing, as laying on the burthen; we have met with evil times (God fit us for the worſt) and we are prone to murmur both at the weight and continuance of our Preſſures, and to expoſtulare with God, and charge his ways as unequal and unreaſonable; let me therefore commend this to you, wait Gods times in all events, learn to ſtand ſtill, and you will ſee the ſalvation of the Lord, you will reap in due ſeaſon, if you faint not, *Gal.* 6. 9. though it be troubleſome, you will find it comfortable and uſefull to your ſpirits,

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when your rebellious hearts ſhall put you on to murmuring and impatience remember this, God hath his time to have mercy upon *Sion*, and he will aſſuredly come, when the ſins of his enemies are come to maturity, become impudent and incorrigible, when our own ſpirits are throughly humbled, and all hopes and helps in man ſo far removed, that we have neither hope nor help but in God, then may we look for him, in the mean time I will wait: Thus he that feareth the Lord, waits contentedly and calmly for his return, he beleeveth in the Lord, and his feet ſtand faſt; This is that time I would intreat you to wait for; and it is the ſecond precious ſtone in the ring, to wait God in his ways and in his times.

The third is to walk with him, which is here in the Text called, *Keeping his Commandments*. The word *Schamar*, ſignifies not only to Keep, but to lay up, and hide, or treaſure in the heart; as *Jacob* is ſaid to have obſerved, or laid up in his heart the ſaying of *Joſeph*: It is tranſlated to take heed, 1 *King*. 2. 4. to obſerve or keep their ways, *Pſal*. 105. 45. A compariſon taken from a Watchman in a City, or the Gariſon in a Fortreſs; all theſe expreſſing that care, diligence, and ſolicitude which all thoſe that fear God have in and about their obedience: This is that yoke of Chriſt I have often commended to you, an eaſie yoke, *Matth*. 11. 30. all pleaſure and profit made up in the word χρηστὸς, a yoke not like that of the Law, a weight and burthen, but fitted and ſmoothed by Chriſt to be an inſtrument of advantage, and make the burthen more eaſie and ſupportable; a yoke wherein Chriſt himſelf draws with and for us, that we may the better undergo it: I know this part of the fear of God will reliſh harſhly with ſuch ſpirits as are unaccuſtomed to this yoke, unacquainted with the ſweetneſſe of it: To take leave of our old acquaintance, to carry out the whole body of our luſts to their Funeral; it goes heavie with a heart under the power of ſin, to ſpiritualize the fleſh, rack it, fetch it from the lees, to put on the yoke, enter the traces, and harneſſe for the future race; theſe are ὠδῖνες θανάτου, the child-birth pangs of dying to ſin; but to thoſe that fear God, the yoke is eaſie, and the burthen light: No life like that of dying to ſin, no way ſo pleaſant as that of walking with God, no treaſure ſo deſireable as to be rich in faith and good works, no comfort like that ſecret contentment a true Believer hath in his conſcionable walking with God: Remember this my good people, Hereby you ſhall much honour that Goſpel which I have taught, and you have received, it is that very uſe which the Apoſtle every where

makes

makes of the Gospel of Christ, that we should walk as becometh the Gospel, that we should in all things adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour, that we should walk worthy of him who hath called us to his Kingdom, and to his glory, shew forth the vertues and praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light, in all these making out the necessity of walking with God in all those that fear his Name.

The last Stone or Diamond in this Ring, is the sincere love of God without hypocrisie, giving him what is his own, the whole heart, without any reserve for Satan, Mammon, or our selves: No man can truly fear God, but he that loves him, nor can any man truly love God, whose soul is not first ravished with the apprehension of the love of Christ to him: *We love God, because he first loved us:* This is that high heroical improvement and elevation of the soul, the want whereof, whether to God or man, is as great a punishment, as it is a sin: There is as much of hell in the quenching of the one flame, as in the raging of the other. The Divel cannot possibly pick out, or designe to his most hated enemy, a greater curse then the want of love: My ever dear people, let me intreat you to remember this, you will find many heavenly and comfortable fruits of it, it will call you out of your selves, to the desire of an union, vision, and participation of the glory and presence of God; the Soul will go to God, like *Noahs* Dove to the Ark, and with infinite sweetnesse and security repose it self in him, it will cause you to resigne the whole heart to God, to give up your selves wholly to him, to conform affections and actions to his Will, to love every thing wherein your souls shall find Christ, his ways, his words, his Ordinances, his Ministers, when the root is thus seasoned, you will find all corruptions and lusts falling off like dead branches: A good man is a good Angel, alwaies beholding the face of God, and the more he sees him, the more he loves him; and the more he loves him, the more he fears him; he loves him in that fear, and fears him in that love. It is said of the two *Marys*, *Mat.* 28. 8. That they went from the Sepulcher with fear, and great joy: A rare composition of so different affections! All other fear being pain, the fear of God brings joy, and love with it.

Amor non nisi donum amantis in amatum. Guil. Paris.

Timor transit in charitatem Greg.

That which I would principally at present urge to you, is that Christian Brotherly love, which the Gospel frequently makes out, and this Age hath almost forgotten, which ariseth from, and is accompanied with our true love to God; Every one that loveth him that

that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him, 1 Joh. 5. 1. 2. How close a connexion there is of the love of God, and the love of our Brethren? Be kindly affectioned Rom. 12. 10; the word is very Emphatical, and signifies such a natural binding love and affection, as is betwixt Parents and children, a real, compassionate, fervent melting love; The Lord Jesus hath left this both to bee our duty and our reward, the loving of the Brethren: would you know the rule you must walk by, love them as your selves, thou wouldst not be hurt, hurt not thy Neigbour, thou wouldst not be reviled, revile no man, thou wouldst not be ill spoken of, speak not ill of others, thou wouldst not be persecuted, persecute no man, this is the Golden Rule; whatsoever yee would that men should do to you, do yee even so to them, this is the Law and the Prophets, or on these two hang the Law and the Prophets Matth. 22, 40. This was sure that fire in the Poet stolne from Heaven to inspire and warme the Lower World with; It is said to be a speech of Christ, which the Nazarene Gospel hath recorded, though our Bibles have it not, *Nunquam læti sitis nisi cum fratrem in charitate videritis*; There is no other badge to difference a disciple of Christ from any other man but this, *Ecce ut se invicem diligunt*; nay, the Devil cannot so far be an Hypocrite, as to counterfeit this; All glorious Appearances without love are but empty shadows, hereby wee become like the Saints in Heaven, of whose blessed estate all wee understand is onely this, that they are happy and love one another, and in that eternally happy, that they eternally love one another, Charity never faileth, and so their blisse faileth not.

Φιλόσοφοι. Mat. 7. 12.

You see, my good people, what times wee are fallen into, what wrath, clamour, malice, bitterness, raylings, revilings there are among men, what disaffections, divisions, persecutions of the Church, even by those that professe they have given up their Names to Christ. So far from being Christian, that they walk as men, nay they have put off man in exchange for Wolves, Panthers, and Tigers, nay worse then Wild Beasts, who are not Beast enough to devoure those of their own kind, as *Erasmus* observes. So Act as if they had made a solemn Covenant with Hell and Death. Let these daily examples from the Father of malice provoke you to love and good workes, to follow God who is love, and to walk in love as Christ also hath loved us. It will be hereafter a great rejoycing to my Spirit, to see you have thus learned Christ, live in love and peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

There are many more branches of this fear of God, every Religious Performance is a part of it, that of prayer especially, as beneficial to the Soule as the rest. But I have not long ago treated of it, and cannot stand now to make it out. I have already tyred you with Preaching that, I should rather have prayed for you, that God would plant his fear in the hearts of every one of you. I have but two words more to speak in relation to 2. extreams or rocks, upon which this fear of God may be in danger to be splits, and I shall give them you by way of Caution.

First in the defect, beware of carnal security in sin, promising your selves mercy and impunity, upon false and empty bottoms, blessing your selves in your hearts, till your iniquity be found hateful, it will bring you at last to that dead and dedolent disposition of Spirit, that being past feeling, ye shall work all uncleanesse with greedinesse, if wee shall thus out dare God in his threatnings, and like that Behemoth, esteem those iron weapons as straw, or as they say of the old Italians, shoot off our great Ordnance, and Ring our bells, to drown the noise of Heaven's thunder, if wee thus presume, God will not spare us, but the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoake against us, &c. remember that saying *Eccl.* 8. 12. Though a Sinner do evil an hundred times, and his dayes be prolonged, yet surely it shall bee well with them that feare the Lord. This is a dangerous and common rock, upon which many a poor soul splits it self, and the more common it is, the more let it bee your care to avoid it.

Deut. 29. 19.

ἀπηλγηκότες *Eph.* 4. 11.

Deut. 29. 20.

The other is in the excesse, and that is a servile infernal fear of God as a Judge or Tyrant, whence arise in the soul hard thoughts of God, hatred of him, a secret rising up against him, a wishing there were no God, and the like. This is that great Engine wherewith Satan labours to batter our faith, when he cannot robb you of grace, and make you wicked, he will endeavour to robb you of comfort and bring you to despaire, make you miserable. Hee will assault you with doubts and feares, touching your Election, conversion, adoption, perseverance, with the greatnesse and number of your sins, with the Curse and horror of the Law, the Majesty and Justice of an offended God, who is a consuming fire. In all these and such like temptations, let your eyes ever be fixed upon Christ and his blood, the satisfaction given to the Justice of God by his death, that redemption from the Curse of the Law, himself being made a curse for us; then will your souls say, *Let the Lord live*; then will your

Quos metacule odcrint.

desires

desires be to the remembrance of his name; then will your hearts love him, and say, *I will sing unto the Lord because he hath dealt bountifully with me*, Psalm 23. 6. This is the foundation against which the Gates of Hell shall not prevail, when there is no sight nor issue, nor possibility to escape, here will a door of deliverance flie open to you. Remember this also, I pray you, if once you come to slight or undervalue this great mercy to tread under foot the Son of God, there remains no more, no other sacrifice for you; you may as much offend God by despairing, as by presuming of his mercy, both are destructive to the true fear of God: lay these things up in your hearts, the Lord of his mercy blesse them to you. *Heb.* 10.29

To all you that thus fear the Lord, shall the Sun of righteousnesse arise with healing under his wings, joy in that day when all the Elect shall behold their King and Redeemer in his Majesty and Glory. For all those that thus fear the Lord, there is a book of remembrance written: It is said of *Tamerlane* the Scythian, that he had alwaies by him a Catalogue of the names and good deserts of his servants, which he dayly perused, and whom he duly rewarded; how much more shal the Lord, who bottles up the tears of his people, puts their Prayers as upon the File, and records all their devotions. All those that thus fear the Lord, he will own in that day when he makes up his Jewels, makes them up for himself, and takes them away from the misusages and malignities of the World. When one desired to see *Alexanders* Treasure, shew him (said he to his Servant) not my Gold or Monies, Plate or Jewels, but my friends: Henceforth, says Christ, I call you not servants, but friends, *John* 15.15. These are Gods Jewels, his dearest friends, his chief Treasure; none can plunder or pluck them out of his hands: They are called, *the dearly beloved of his Soul*, Jer. 12. 7. the Lxx read it, *his dearly beloved Soul*, noting Gods Saints to be as dear to him, as a mans life or his Soul is: All these, and these only, wil the Lord pity and spare at that day, as a father spareth his own son that serveth him.

Mal. 4. 2.

Mal. 3. 16.

ἔδωκα πὴν ἠγαπημένην ψυχὴν μοῦ

I have now done both with the Text and the Times; I have presented you with a New-years-gift of an inestimable value and worth, All I require from you is but this, That I may see you wear it; that as great Personages are known by their Rings and rich Jewels; so you may be by the fear of the Lord: This Ring truly worn, will seal to your souls assurance of salvation in this life, and be to every one of you at your death a wedding Ring to marry you to the Lamb for evermore: Your tears at this time sufficiently witnesse, how sadly

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you receive it from my hands; God wil I hope put your tears into his bottle; and that Fountain which he hath opened in your eys this day, ſhall ſwell into Rivers of comfort and ſalvation at that day, when God ſhall wipe away all tears from your eys: All I can do, is to pray for you, ſince I muſt no longer Preach to you; I pray God bleſſe his Church; I pray God bleſſe you all, and that God of Peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus, that great Shepheard of the ſheep, through the blood of the everlaſting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt, to whom be glory, and honour, now, and evermore.

FINIS.